

MFL learning unit: Creativity

Resource document

Building creativity into MFL lessons: practical examples

Invite learners to take part in a short creative activity that could be replicated in a Key Stage 3 lesson as part of a unit with travel or leisure as a context. Give the following instructions:

- think of a beach resort where the foreign language of your choice is spoken
- now imagine that you are working for an advertising agency in the country where the resort is situated
- you have been invited by the local tourist board to submit the script of a short, appealing radio jingle advertising the resort
- the script must consist of exactly 25 words
- you are free to decide the style and content of the jingle.

Give learners 10 minutes to create their script. They can work in pairs or alone. On completion, invite learners to read their contributions aloud to the whole group (if small numbers are involved) or within groups (if there are large numbers).

This type of task could feature in a Key Stage 3 scheme of work, in this or in other contexts, for example:

- a description of an exotic and unusual pet – to be placed in the ‘wanted’ section of the small ads page of a newspaper
- a short film review for a magazine.

The best MFL lessons offer some excellent opportunities for learners to apply their language in a creative way, making for high levels of challenge. In MFL, teachers should plan for learners to:

Generate and extend ideas – for example, when they are taught core language items and are given an opportunity to add items pertinent to themselves (e.g. a topic on house and home could lead to more imaginative ideas, such as:

‘je voudrais habiter une maison avec une plateforme pour ma navette spatiale’ (8S2) or the use of alliteration, ‘ma maison magnifique’.

Suggest hypotheses – for example, when giving reasons for someone liking a particular football club, they hypothesise as to why, or they hypothesise about differences in word endings, such as amigo/amiga, so that they make a link between spelling and gender.

Apply imagination – for example, when they have analysed a model description of a holiday in three different tenses, they write a fictional description of their nightmare holiday with a pop star of their choice.

Look for alternative innovative outcomes – for example, when sharing strategies for remembering vocabulary or structures they try someone else's idea or, for example, when they have to provide an alternative ending to a story.

Audience and purpose:

Audience and purpose is a key aspect of the National Curriculum programme of study for MFL as well as the MFL Framework (9T6).

Example

The German dramatist Bertolt Brecht used a technique which he called, *der Verfremdungseffekt* – the art of making the familiar strange. This technique can also be helpful in getting learners to think about audience and purpose. By changing the audience and purpose of a typical piece of writing, this technique refocuses learners on the stylistic features and the motivation behind the writing, rather than the content. For example, imagine rewriting a TV weather report about a whirlwind as an advert: „Wollen Sie eine Stadt zerstören? Kaufen Sie den neusten Wirbelwind von Windkatastrophe!“, or setting a description of a typical weekend as a haiku (a 17-syllable poem, traditionally with lines of 5/7/5 syllables respectively): 'Le weekend est là / Je mange, je dors, je joue et / C'est déjà passé'. Traditional Japanese Haiku can be translated and then reworked into different formats for different audiences – imagine the following reworked as a newspaper article: 'Le voleur / m'a tout emporté, sauf / La lune qui était à ma fenêtre'. In order to really provoke learners into considering what they should include for a specific audience, they should rewrite the same piece in different formats for 3 or 4 different audiences, e.g. a description of a disastrous holiday written as (a) a newspaper article, (b) a radio script, (c) a recipe and (d) an entry in a 'How to' manual.

Other examples include the following:

- Learners watch sets of advertisements from French TV and discuss in English the kind of language used and aspects of the style, e.g. adjectives, imperatives. They compile a list of phrases used to persuade people to buy goods, using a dictionary as appropriate, and then write, perform and video their own adverts for healthy/unhealthy products (c.f. QCA scheme of work for French, Unit 13 'Ça va?').
- Learners change a text from a present tense to a simple past tense description or account (framework objective 9T6).
- Learners use the drama strategy 'Role-on-the-wall' to identify key characteristics of groups in society. 'Role-on-the-wall' is a type of brainstorming activity and allows learners to create a character. An androgenous outline figure is sketched and learners contribute characteristics which go to make up that character. Contributions can be categorised by placing characteristics and character traits within the outline and external factors – either appearance or influences – around the figure.

Resources

Audience and purpose: Appendix A

Entwerfen Sie den außerordentlichen Schüler / die außerordentliche Schülerin!

Welche Eigenschaften hat der außerordentlichen Schüler/die außerordentliche Schülerin? Das müssen Sie entwerfen ...aber VORSICHT! ...der Schüler/die Schülerin muss gutes Wissen überall haben! ...das heißt in *jedem* Fachbereich! Sie müssen auch aus dieser Liste die Eigenschaften nehmen (...es gibt zwei freie Möglichkeiten, wenn Sie Ihre eigenen Eigenschaften hinzufügen möchten). Sie können bis sechs Eigenschaften auswählen. Begründen Sie Ihre Eigenschaften.

Der außerordentliche Schüler / Die außerordentliche Schülerin ...

1. ist kreativ	11. ist cool
2. löst Probleme	12. behandelt Leute mit Rücksicht
3. verbindet die Fächer miteinander	13. glaubt, daß es immer noch etwas zu lernen gibt
4. sieht ordentlich aus	14. sieht alles aus einer anderen Sicht
5. ist organisiert	15. benutzt die Kenntnis, die man schon hat
6. ergreift die Initiative	16. ist hart
7. hat hohe Erwartungen	17. ist sauber
8. kümmert sich um Leute	18. arbeitet mit anderen Leuten
9. ist stolz auf die Arbeit	19.
10. ist selbstständig	20.

Nummer 1 ist wichtig, weil ...

Ich glaube das Nummer 3 wichtig ist, weil...

Design ‘The Outstanding Pupil’

What characterises an outstanding pupil?

You have to design such an outstanding pupil – however, you need to design a pupil who can be outstanding in *all* subject areas. You also have to choose from the list of characteristics below (there are two blank spaces should you wish to add in characteristics of your own). You can choose up to SIX characteristics for your outstanding pupil. Justify your characteristics.

The outstanding pupil ...

1. Is creative	11. Is cool
2. Solves problems	12. Respects others
3. Makes links across topics and sees	13. Believes there is always more to learn connections between subjects
4. Looks tidy	14. Sees everything from a different viewpoint
5. Is organised	15. Uses existing knowledge
6. Takes the initiative	16. Is hard
7. Has high expectations	17. Is clean
8. Is caring	18. Works with others
9. Is proud of their work	19.
10. Is independent	20

Classifying:

Classifying is an excellent strategy to use in MFL. The inductive method is particularly useful for generating and processing language items, e.g. learners are asked to classify a random group of adjectives – they may classify them according to the meaning of the words, the gender, the sound, the spelling, etc.

Other examples include the following:

- As learners' linguistic ability develops, increasingly sophisticated classification tasks can be conducted in the target language, e.g. content of different types of publication (8T3), environmentally friendly products/actions, phrases for letters, etc.
- As Year 9 learners approach Options, replace the usual presentation about MFL courses with an inductive card sort on the value and use of MFL in society – include business, recreational, linguistic and social reasons.

Classifying: Appendix B

a. On bouffe! Data set

1. poulet	10. oignons	19. foie	28. lardons	37. épinards
2. petit-pois	11. porc	20. ananas	29. citrons	38. abricots
3. fraises	12. noix	21. poisson	30. pain	39. fromage
4. jambon	13. confiture	22. cuisses de	31. bière à	40. boeuf grenouille pression
5. glace	14. framboises	23. limonade	32. escargots	41. vin rouge
6. lait	15. l'eau	24. thé	33. coca	42. beurre minérale
7. chou	16. chou-fleur	25. carottes	34. salade	43. laitue
8. pommes	17. pommes champignons	26. de terre	35. gâteau	44. sel
9. chips	18. pâtés	27. bifteck-haché	36. frites	45. cerises

Collective memory:

Using visuals is such an integral part of MFL teaching, that it is very easy to use the 'Collective memory' strategy in lessons. It can be used very effectively with learners describing what they see either in English or in the target language.

Another example includes:

- To practice learners' speaking skills and as an alternative to choral repetition, use the 'spoken text from memory' strategy. Learners have to recreate a dialogue/short presentation – which is either read to them by a Foreign Language Assistant / teacher / able learner or is pre-recorded. Learners listen to the extract in turn and the groups are challenged to see which group can recreate the spoken extract most accurately. In order to raise the level of challenge, the teacher can limit the amount of note taking or visual support learners are allowed to make use of – from allowing them to write out the whole text, to allowing key words and prompts (à la GCSE speaking tests), to only allowing visual notes, to no notes at all.

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